

Message Text

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ORIGIN EB-08

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 191605

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAIR, IT

SUBJECT: CIVAIR: GOI THREAT TO PAN AM FLIGHTS BEYOND ROME

1. DEPT ADVISED BY PAN AM THAT ROME AIRPORT DIRECTOR CALLED ATTENTION OF PAN AM ROME REP TO FACT THAT PAN AM FLIGHT OPERATED BEYOND ROME JULY 28 CARRIED 206 PASSENGERS; 21 PASSENGERS IN EXCESS OF NARROW-BODIED PLANE CAPACITY OF 185. AIRPORT DIRECTOR REMINDED PAN AM REP OF FREEZE ON US AIRLINES' 1978 SUMMER CAPACITY TO LEVEL OPERATED PREVIOUS SUMMER SEASON AND ASSERTED THAT THE FREEZE MEANT THAT PAN AM COULD NOT CARRY MORE THAN 185 LOCALLY BOARDING OR DEPLANING PASSENGERS ON ANY FLIGHT BEYOND ROME. AIRPORT DIRECTOR REPORTEDLY THREATENED TO INTERRUPT PAN AM'S FLIGHTS JULY 29 AND 30 IF THEY CARRIED IN EXCESS OF 185 PASSENGERS.

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2. USG DOES NOT ACCEPT UNILATERAL ITALIAN ASSERTION THAT FREEZE ON US AIRLINES' CAPACITY FOR SUMMER 1978 SEASON APPLIES TO SINGLE FLIGHTS. WE BELIEVE THAT OVERALL CAPACITY LEVEL IS FROZEN, NOTHING ELSE, AND THAT WITHIN PARAMETER OF TOTAL CAPACITY LEVEL OPERATED DURING PREVIOUS SEASON, AIRLINE HAS FLEXIBILITY TO OPERATE AT ITS DISCRETION.

3. EMBASSY REQUESTED TO VERIFY PAN AM REPORT AND DRAW UPON TEXT OF FOLLOWING NOTE IN REPRESENTATIONS TO APPROPRIATE GOI OFFICIALS PROTESTING AIRPORT DIRECTORS WARNINGS AND STATING SERIOUS CONCERN OF USG OVER ANY INTERFERENCE WITH US AIRLINES LEGITIMATE OPERATIONS.

BEGIN TEXT: ...REFERS TO MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS NOTES NUMBER 079/2688 DATED FEBRUARY 10, 1978 AND NUMBER 079/6064 DATED APRIL 4, 1978 CONCERNING SCHEDULED SERVICES OF US AIRLINES DURING THE 1978 SUMMER SEASON.

IT HAS BEEN REPORTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE THAT ON JULY 28, 1978 THE DIRECTOR OF THE ROME AIRPORT INFORMED THE REPRESENTATIVE OF PAN AMERICAN WORLD AIRWAYS IN ROME THAT A PAN AMERICAN FLIGHT CARRYING 206 PASSENGERS BEYOND ROME WAS IN VIOLATION OF THE FREEZE ON US AIRLINES' SUMMER 1978 CAPACITY IMPOSED UNDER PROVISION OF PARAGRAPH 5(F) OF THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING OF MAY 21, 1970. THE AIRPORT DIRECTOR REPORTEDLY SAID THAT PAN AMERICAN FLIGHTS BEYOND ROME MAY CARRY A MAXIMUM OF 185 PASSENGERS, THE CAPACITY OF NARROW-BODIED AIRCRAFT USED DURING THE 1977 SUMMER SEASON. PAN AMERICAN REPORTS THAT THE AIRPORT DIRECTOR WARNED THEIR REPRESENTATIVE THAT HENCEFORTH ANY FLIGHTS CARRYING MORE THAN 185 PASSENGERS BEYOND ROME WILL NOT BE CLEARED FOR TAKE-OFF.
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THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT REQUESTS A VERIFICATION OF THIS REPORT. THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT'S POSITION WAS MADE CLEAR IN THE UNITED STATES EMBASSY'S REPLY TO THE ABOVE-REFERENCED FOREIGN MINISTRY NOTES. THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT DOES NOT AGREE THAT US AIRLINES' CAPACITY FOR THE 1978 SUMMER SEASON IS LIMITED EXCEPT IN THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF USABLE CAPACITY WHICH MAY BE OFFERED TO THE PUBLIC. REGARDING THE CARRIAGE OF TRAFFIC BETWEEN ROME AND POINTS BEYOND ROME DURING THE 1978 SUMMER SEASON, IT IS THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENTS' UNDERSTANDING THAT THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF USABLE CAPACITY WHICH PAN AMERICAN WORLD AIRWAYS WILL OFFER TO THE PUBLIC WILL BE NO GREATER THAN THE 1977 SUMMER SEASON CAPACITY LEVEL. WITHIN THESE PARAMETERS, PAN AMERICAN MAY EXERCISE ITS JUDGMENT AS TO HOW AND WHEN PASSENGERS MAY BE CARRIED.

THE GOVERNMENT OF ITALY SHOULD BE AWARE THAT THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT WOULD VIEW WITH SERIOUS CONCERN ANY ACTION BY ITALIAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS TO INTERFERE WITH THE LEGITIMATE OPERATION OF US AIRLINES' SERVICES IN ITALY. END TEXT. VANCE

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